

what has to go. That is exactly what we need to do at the national level.

The Senator from North Dakota is correct about another point, and that is that the discretionary portion of our budget is getting squeezed. According to Comptroller General David Walker, the portion of discretionary spending in 1966 was 67 percent of the total budget. By 1986, this portion had dropped to 44 percent. By 2006, a couple years ago, it was down to 38 percent.

This shrinking percentage of discretionary spending, however, is not because we are spending less in terms of nominal dollars. The fact is we spent almost twice as much on discretionary programs in 2007 as we did in 2000. However, our mandatory spending is increasing so much faster. This growth in the entitlement programs, such as Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security, is squeezing out our ability to grow the amount we spend on discretionary programs.

But the answer is not to increase discretionary spending even by what the proponents of this budget are calling a very small amount. We are going in the wrong direction, and this small amount will compound into a large amount in a few years. And guess what. Once we spend and it gets built into the baseline, it is almost impossible to get it out.

This leads me to the third faulty premise underlying this budget resolution, and that is it is safe to ignore our longer term problems with Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security. I know if I were to separately ask each Member of this body if we need to do something about the growth of these programs, there is a good chance that every single Senator would agree we cannot afford to ignore them and that something has to be done to save our future. But as I looked over this budget resolution, I cannot seem to find the part that addresses the growth of these programs, and yet the Government Accountability Office tells us that between now and 2032, spending on Medicare and Medicaid alone will grow about 230 percent. At the same time, our GDP will grow about 70 percent if we are lucky.

Let me share some truly frightening numbers with you. The Government Accountability Office recently computed the fiscal exposures we face as a nation from our unfunded obligations under Social Security and Medicare. In 2007 dollars, our total unfunded liability for future Social Security benefits, assuming the law does not change, is \$6.8 trillion—that is trillion dollars. This is a number of galactic proportions, so big that it is hard to comprehend. But I have to tell you, it pales in comparison to the amount of our unfunded liability associated with Medicare, which is more than \$34 trillion—that is trillion dollars, \$34 trillion. When this is combined with all other major fiscal exposures, the GAO estimates that our total unfunded liability is almost \$53 trillion. That is with a T.

This amount is nearly as high as the total household net worth of Americans, which is \$59 trillion.

In other words, we are nearly bankrupt as a nation. Within a few years, we will absolutely be bankrupt if something is not done. It is clear that this path is not sustainable. We all know it. Our children know it, and our grandchildren are going to find it out the hard way. They are going to blame us if we do not act to turn things around. It is as if we are all in a ship floating down a river. The waters are quite calm now, but the map shows that a very high and dangerous waterfall is ahead of us. We know if we do not turn the ship around, disaster awaits. But it is not an easy thing to do. We know we cannot turn it around in 1 year. It will take a lot of work and sacrifice. It will take pain.

It is easy to say we should wait, that this is an election year and a new captain and maybe a new crew will be taking over after the election. But I say to my colleagues, we cannot afford to wait. In the midst of the calm water, we can hear the roar of the waterfall. We are coming to it very quickly, and if we wait too long, catastrophe will result. The budget before us does nothing about the cataclysm just down the river. It is a fatal flaw.

I started by mentioning that the rich do pay a lot of taxes right now. Actually, the rich are paying more after the tax cuts than they were paying before. The fact is, the upper 1 percent of the rich—the last time I saw the figures, and it is even worse now—are paying about 39 percent of all income taxes—the upper 1 percent of all taxpayers. And the top 5 percent pay about 60 percent of all taxes. And the upper 50 percent pay almost 97 percent of all income taxes. Think about that. The bottom 50 percent pay little or none and many of them get largess from the Federal Government. So this idea that the rich need to pay more is a phony argument. It is time people got called on that argument. It is phony, it doesn't make sense, and we have to get with it around here. We cannot keep bringing up these phony budgets such as this with all the budgetary gimmicks this one has in it.

I don't blame the distinguished Senator from North Dakota. He has a side that is fractionated. They want to spend more—that is how they keep themselves in power—and he has to find gimmicks and some way of justifying additional spending, and this budget is filled with additional spending, additional taxes, and a lot of budgetary gimmicks that should not be in it.

I urge my colleagues to reject this budget resolution. Let's get started on one that recognizes the dangers ahead and begins to turn this ship around before we hit that cataclysmic waterfall.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be allowed to speak before Senator COBURN, my colleague from Oklahoma.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I rise in support of the budget resolution before us this evening. Governing is about choosing. This budget makes the right choices and at the same time maintains fiscal discipline.

Over the past year, I have held some 85 roundtables of 20 or 25 people each in communities across the State. I have held them in some 55 of Ohio's counties, listening to workers and business leaders, listening to teachers and sheriffs, listening to people running social service agencies and people served by those social service agencies. In every town I visited, Ohioans have asked to work together with the Federal Government, not for a handout, not necessarily for assistance, but to work together with the Federal Government in attacking the problems of our small towns, our rural areas, our inner-ring suburbs, and our big cities.

I have heard from employers who have good jobs that go begging because we have not trained or retrained people in the skills they need. I have heard from county commissioners, worried that their crumbling bridges may fall and that their water and sewer infrastructures are not sound. I have heard from doctors who think we can do a much better job of providing access to health care through their offices and their examining rooms rather than through the emergency room, and not just for the 47 million Americans without health insurance, including 9 million children, but for the millions of people in this country with inadequate health insurance.

Last month we saw the priorities of the Bush administration when he sent his budget to Congress. The Bush budget proposed to cut funding for job training and technical education. Today I met with people from Wayne County and Butler County, from Geauga County and Cuyahoga County, and all over my State, to talk to people who are teachers and administrators, and superintendents and students, who depend on vocational training, technical education, and who provide training for so many in our State.

The Bush budget proposed to cut the community development block grants by more than 20 percent. As big cities and small towns face the impending problems that are in the midst now of these problems with foreclosures, the Bush budget proposed to cut health care for seniors and for children, and these are the choices of the Bush administration. They are the choices of an administration that has gone in the wrong direction year after year after